PROVINCIAL MULTICULTURAL POLICY

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PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND
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PROVINCIAL MULTICULTURAL POLICY

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PREFACE

Multiculturalism has been celebrated and promoted on Prince Edward Island for many years, with the leadership of the P.E.I. Multicultural Council and its member associations, in an effort to build a more tolerant and just society.

Last year, my Department invited the Multicultural Council to participate in developing a Provincial Multicultural Policy for the consideration of Government. Having subsequently received the approval of Policy Board and Cabinet, it is with great pleasure that I present this landmark policy statement for your interest.

It is appropriate, I think, for Government to recognize the unique multicultural character of the province, to embrace the multicultural ideal through official policy, and to assume a shared responsibility for ensuring that the principles outlined in this policy are observed.

Gilbert Clements

Gilbert R. Clements
Minister
Community and Cultural Affairs

ISLAND MULTICULTURALISM

Prince Edward Island is a province with a distinctively multicultural composition. Cultural diversity encourages this province to develop special relationships with many countries and many people around the world. **The purpose of Prince Edward Island's multicultural policy is to promote cultural survival and expression, further cross-cultural understanding, acknowledge the contribution of cultural diversity and ensure the equal treatment of all people living in Prince Edward Island.**

Prince Edward Island enjoys a unique position within the Canadian context and our distinctive patterns of immigration and settlement have imbued our Island province with a deep-rooted awareness of its special role. Beginning with the indigenous peoples, and continuing with the successive immigrations of recent centuries, Prince Edward Island's history, spirit and heritage are founded in cultural pluralism. Prince Edward Island's multicultural policy recognizes the importance of immigration to the overall development of this province, and further, celebrates the fact that our Island fabric is woven with threads of such a rich and diverse quality.

The immigration process is a dynamic one, with a history that looks back several centuries and a future that will continue for all the generations to come. Prince Edward Island's multicultural policy acknowledges the very special and cherished relationship between immigration and multiculturalism and the very important contribution of immigrants.

The Province of Prince Edward Island has the responsibility to take a strong leadership role in encouraging cultural expression, cross-cultural appreciation and mutual respect among all people. Prince Edward Island's multicultural policy is for all people. It respects the rights of all individuals and groups to reach full potential, regardless of race, religion, ethnicity, language or length of residency. It promotes the opportunity to overcome economic, social and political barriers to equal participation within Canadian society and, more particularly, within Prince Edward Island society. Prince Edward Island's multicultural policy offers a framework and a guideline for communities and individuals to promote human and group relations in which ethnic, racial, linguistic and religious similarities and differences are valued and respected. It encourages all people to enjoy the richness and diversity of a multicultural society, and to appreciate and benefit from the diverse experiences and ideas that others bring to this Island province.

This policy helps communities and individuals break down the barriers that may exist between them. By doing so, Prince Edward Island's multicultural policy contributes to a citizenship-building process that will benefit, immeasurably, generations to come.

Prince Edward Island's multicultural policy is built on four principles of multiculturalism:

- **equality**
- **appreciation**
- **preservation**
- **participation.**

OBJECTIVES

Prince Edward Island's multicultural policy will:

- serve to indicate that the province embraces the multicultural reality of Canadian society and acknowledges that Prince Edward Island has a distinctive multicultural heritage

- acknowledge the intrinsic worth and continuing contribution of all Prince Edward Islanders regardless of race, religion, ethnicity, linguistic origin or length of residency

- serve as an affirmation of Human Rights for all Prince Edward Islanders and as a complement to the equality of rights guaranteed in the P.E.I. Human Rights Act and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms

- serve to enhance Section 27 of the Charter - "This charter shall be interpreted in a manner consistent with the preservation and enhancement of the multicultural heritage of Canadians"

- encourage specific legislative, political and social commitments to multiculturalism in Prince Edward Island.

MINISTERIAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

In order that these principles serve and benefit all the people and the province, a Ministerial Advisory Committee will advise the Minister Responsible on matters pertaining to multiculturalism. The Ministerial Advisory Committee will be comprised of representatives of the ethnic/cultural communities and organizations in the province. As the leading provincial agency in the field of multiculturalism, the P.E.I. Multicultural Council will act in a consultative capacity for the Minister in his determination of appointments to the Advisory Committee. Further, the P.E.I. Multicultural Council will nominate two (2) members to the Ministerial Advisory Committee.

The Ministerial Advisory Committee shall meet at least four times a year, and shall submit an annual report to Cabinet once a year.

The Ministerial Advisory Committee shall recommend a chairperson from its membership every two years.

The Ministerial Advisory Committee shall:

- advise the Minister Responsible for Multiculturalism as is appropriate, or as the Minister may request, on issues affecting the multicultural community.
- identify the needs and concerns of ethnic/cultural minorities.
- review existing legislation, policies, programs and activities of government, its agencies, and educational institutions, which have an impact on the implementation of the province's multicultural policy.
- advise government, its agencies, and educational institutions on the appropriateness/effectiveness of proposed legislation, policies, programs and activities which impact on the multicultural community.
- otherwise advise and make recommendations to the Minister Responsible.

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